

# Students design virtual ID badge to combat online hackers

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A student entrepreneurial team at the University of Utah believes it has come up with a winning business plan for a virtual ID badge that operates off of any mobile device. The team, calling itself EMRID Technologies, developed a product that could be used in place of other common electronic ID badges used by hospitals, defense companies or other firms where securing data is of the utmost importance.

“We essentially replaced traditional username and password authentication systems with a proprietary virtual ID badge,” said Austin Aerts, CFO of EMRID Technologies, and accounting student at the David Eccles School of [Business](#). “We knew we had this great idea, but entering Opportunity Quest really taught us the difference between a great idea and a great [business plan](#).”

Other EMRID team members were Emily Theisen, CEO of EMRID, and Ph.D student David Kent of the U’s College of Pharmacy, who is also a student at the S.J. Quinney College of Law.

EMRID’s business plan recently bested 23 entries made by undergraduate, graduate and Ph.D. students in the business school’s annual Opportunity Quest competition. More than 200 students, mentors, advisors and business team members gathered to contribute to the multi-round competition. Business plan submissions stemmed from the medical, chemical, technological, athletic, social, security and educational fields.

Numerous colleges across Utah host separate Opportunity Quest competitions. Top teams, like EMRID, advance to the Utah Entrepreneur Challenge at the U for a chance to win \$40,000. EMRID hopes their technology is innovative enough to win the top prize.

“Employees constantly use personal [mobile devices](#) for professional activities, yet sensitive information must continue to be protected by company and governmental standards,” Aerts said. “EMRID offers a simple — yet elegant — solution to this by turning mobile devices into virtual ID badges. In doing so, they don’t need to enter a password that can be hacked and the device can facilitate professional use of personal devices while working within the constraints of current IT and security systems.”

Dolly Holt, winner of the fall’s techTITANS idea competition, won continued support for her ligament and tendon repair device by placing second in Opportunity Quest. IB-Tape, a sports medicine product team, placed third. TechTITANS, the first of the three competitions in the Utah Entrepreneur Series, precedes Opportunity Quest and the Utah Entrepreneur Challenge. For the first time, green energy ideas can earn \$100,000 through the Challenge by taking advantage of a new partnership between the Utah Entrepreneur Series and the University of Colorado Boulder.

The 24 entries in the U’s Opportunity Quest underlined students’ innovative mindset and entrepreneurial tendencies. Several entries emerged from the U’s Lassonde Center and Technology Commercialization Office, while others utilized resources such as the Foundry and Student Entrepreneur Conference to develop their ideas. University students were provided access to mentors in the business community, whose expertise helped to refine ideas and give them real-world application.

“Because of my success within techTITANS and Opportunity Quest, I was recently contacted by a company regarding a potential partnership,” says Holt.

Opportunity Quest is part of the U’s Lassonde Entrepreneur Center, which provides a variety of business and entrepreneurship programs for undergraduates and graduates. The Lassonde Center is jointly managed by the David Eccles School of Business and the Technology Venture Development office.

Learn more about Opportunity Quest and related competitions at [www.ues.utah.edu](http://www.ues.utah.edu)

Provided by University of Utah

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